

OBSERVATIONS

ON

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"A N A P P E A L

"FROM THE

"PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION,

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"TO THE

"PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN."

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. PAYNE and SON, at the Mews-Gate.

M D C C L X X X ,

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Printed for T. Payne and Son, at the New-Court.

W. B. C. K. N. E. T.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

PART THE FIRST.

WHEN parliament, with the concurrence of all parties, relieved the English Papists from some of the grievances to which they had so long been exposed, and tempered this act of necessary indulgence, with precautions seemingly sufficient to quiet those who withheld their acquiescence, I must confess I approved their proceedings; and flattered myself with the concurrence of the nation in general. I have not been disappointed. The voice of the people has inspired me with a confidence, which the insidious attempts of the Protestant Association are unable to move. However, my

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respect

respect and esteem for toleration does not lead me to disregard the security of our religion. My regard for the established church, is not inferior to that with which the members of the *Association* are warmed. My abhorrence of cruelty is as great as theirs; and I equally detest the thought of persecution, whether it is cherished by a Protestant or a Papist.

These pages are not written with a view to derogate from any principle that may originate in a strict notion of virtue. There is a degree of applause due even to a mistaken zeal for religion, that I wish not to lessen. But it is the spirit of intolerance I wish to combat; and the error which gave rise to it, that I wish to remove. And as the weight of several arguments adopted by the *Society*, depend upon the establishment of that error, I hope I may be allowed to give it my earliest attention. A great part of their work must stand or fall, with this fundamental point. Their * account of former barbarities can

* An Appeal from the Protestant Association to the People of Great Britain, Section the first.

be of little use, if there is no possibility of the shocking scenes being re-acted. Their * account of the laws that have been passed *heretofore*, can add but little to their opinion, if the situation that required those laws, is altered. Their † reasonings against the late act of parliament in favour of the Papists, can be of no service, if it is found, that the very act itself answers every one of their objections. And a ‡ *conclusion*, from false premises, need no comment.

The very title page of the book published by the *Protestant Association*, bears ample testimony of the false ideas which have influenced them. They, there, hold forth their motto in the words of Sherlock; who has said, that, "To design the advancement of Popery, is to design the ruin of the state, and the destruction of the church." We need not a bishop's authority to convince us of this truth. And sixty pages are unnecessarily wasted, to

* Protestant Appeal, Section second.

† Ibid, Section third and fourth.

‡ Ibid, page 36.

prove it. That the consequences of advancing Popery will be injurious to the Protestant interest, is one of those self-evident positions that need no explanation. But the facts necessary to make it of consequence, are by no means established. We have no proof of Popery being encouraged in this kingdom. We have no proof of the intention. I cannot account the assertion of a *club*, however respectable, sufficient for such a purpose, when the * act of parliament on which that assertion is grounded, most flatly contradicts it. I cannot suppose our legislature, when they passed that act, so deceived as to misunderstand the nature of it: so infatuated as to design the *ruin of the state*, or so wicked as to design the *ruin of the church*. An intention of restoring to the Papists some of the rights of humanity, cannot, surely, imply either the one or the other.

Let us, however, in a question of this importance, state the fact, and draw our

* Act 18th Geo. III. intituled, "An Act for relieving his Majesty's Subjects professing the Popish Religion," &c. &c.

inferences from that only. That we may really know, whether the advancement of popery is intended now, more than in the reign of William the third, let us make the act by which the situation of it is altered, the basis of our inquiry.

My idea of the powers contained in that statute is, 'That popish ecclesiastics and teachers of youth, cannot now, as such, be imprisoned; though the public exercise of the Roman religion is no more allowed than it was before—That papists are permitted to purchase and inherit lands in their own name, but that the other disabilities still continue—And that these privileges are confined to those who take an oath of allegiance to the Brunswick line, and renounce all the odious claims of the church of Rome, which have long lain dormant in England, and never were allowed of in the Gallican church.' This construction, I believe, is supported by the greatest legal authority. It is the construction that was given in the House of Commons, about the time of passing the act, by one

of our most able lawyers. Let my readers, however, examine the act, and judge for themselves. By that alone, I desire to have my opinion confirmed. To those who may concur with me in the interpretation I have given, the liberties afforded to the papists will by no means appear unreasonable; but the *Association* are pleased to offer reasons why no indulgences should be granted to the members of the church of Rome. The writers of the *Appeal* say in their * introduction, "if the doctrines held by papists were confined to matters of opinion in religion, and did not include political tenets of the most dangerous tendency, they might expect the same connivance which has generally been extended to other erroneous sects." When the members of a religion hold no doctrine detrimental to the interests of the state they live in, they are, according to my ideas of justice, entitled to more than a connivance. They should be placed by the

* Protestant Appeal, p. 4th,

laws in a state of security. They should not be subject to the malice of any individual. They should enjoy many privileges in common with their fellow subjects. To hinder any bad effects flowing from these indulgences, some restraining statutes are requisite. And I think certain disabilities may be equally necessary on all those, who differ in the smallest degree from the established church.

But let us consider the particular tenets of the papists, which render them unworthy of the indulgence the society seems so willing to grant to all other sects. * They ask, "If the political principles of the papists do not oblige them to deny the supremacy of the king of England?" and say, "They have naturally some obligations of interest to a foreign claimant." The members of the Roman religion residing in England, have almost universally sworn to the following tenets: † "I A. B. do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance

* Protestant Appeal, p. 12.

† Oath in the Act of the 18th George III. &c.

“ to his majesty king *George* the third,
 “ and him will defend, to the utmost of
 “ my power, against all conspiracies and
 “ attempts whatever that shall be made
 “ against his person, crown, or digni-
 “ ty; and I will do my utmost endea-
 “ vour to disclose and make known to
 “ his Majesty, his heirs and successors,
 “ all treasons and traiterous conspira-
 “ cies which may be formed against
 “ him or them; and I do faithfully pro-
 “ mise to maintain, support, and de-
 “ fend, to the utmost of my power, the
 “ succession of the crown in his Maje-
 “ sty’s family, against any person or
 “ persons whatsoever; hereby utterly re-
 “ nouncing and abjuring any obedience
 “ or allegiance unto the person taking
 “ upon himself the stile and title of
 “ *Prince of Wales*, in the life-time of his
 “ father, and who, since his death, is
 “ said to have assumed the stile and title
 “ of *King of Great Britain*, by the name of
 “ *Charles the third*; and to any other person
 “ claiming or pretending a right to the
 “ crown of these realms.” And again :
 “ And

“ And I do declare, that I do not believe
 “ that the Pope of *Rome*, or any other
 “ foreign prince, prelate, state, or po-
 “ tentate, hath, or ought to have, any
 “ temporal or civil jurisdiction, power,
 “ supremacy, or pre-eminence, directly
 “ or indirectly, within this realm.”

How can the *Protestant Association* reconcile the principles they have imputed to the papists, with the engagements they enter into when they take this oath? How can any body of men accuse those of denying the “ supremacy of the king of “ England,” who swear allegiance to him in a most positive form of words? How can persons, disclaiming in a most solemn manner the title of the Stuart family, be * accused of an attachment to the descendants of James II. ? But we are † told ‘ James lost his crown, for adhering to popery ;’ and ‘ that popery cannot be a crime in the eyes of a papist.’ Of these two propositions, the first is not strictly true ; for James might have held the throne, had he been contented with

* Protestant Appeal p. 12.

† Ibid.

the private exercise of his religion. And in regard to the second, I hope popery is no *crime* in the eyes of any good protestant. Nor is it necessary a person should regard in that light any religion, as a proof of faithfulness to the king of England. It is sufficient for us, if the members of the Romish church, discriminate between the religion of James II. and the system of politics he pursued. They are endued with the feelings of patriotism as well as other men. They are attached to a free government, as Englishmen, through affection. It is our fault if they are not attached to it through interest. It is * imputed by the *society*, as a crime in the papists of these kingdoms, 'that ties of gratitude and affection bind them in allegiance to the successor of that prince, who lost his crown in support of their cause.' Is this the case? I much doubt whether they think that family entitled to their regard. But admitting it to be true, will not punishment extend those sentiments? And to treat

* Protestant Appeal, p. 13.

them with as much severity as they could be liable to, under the most absolute monarch, would be a poor recommendation of our happy government, or of the known lenity of the Brunswick line. The Roman-catholics are † acknowledged to be good subjects at present. Why not encrease, then, their natural prepossession for their country, by suffering them to enjoy the benefits of its constitution? Punishment should have only reformation in view. The Protestant Association ‡ own the penal statutes have effected it. Is it then consistent with either justice or humanity, to continue the punishment when the crime is done away? In our present rather embarrassed situation, the papists have in their offers been found Englishmen. Let us consider them as such in every way compatible with our safety, and we shall find them Englishmen still. The Spanish government seem to consider them as our fellow subjects, by sentiment as well as birth. The English Roman-catholics,

† Protestant Appeal, p. 24. ‡ P. 43.

who

who had settled at Cadiz, and been naturalized, have been driven from thence, through a dread of the bad effects that might arise from their affection for this country. We can adopt these sentiments respecting foreigners resident in these realms. We can attribute to the subjects of an arbitrary power, that patriotism of which we deny the existence in a free-born Englishman. How long must we be the only nation upon earth, that disbelieves the sentiments of attachment, that prevail even to madness in the hearts of our countrymen? Or how long support the opinion of the misanthrope, by holding no belief but what is dictated by suspicion?

Other reasons urged against the toleration of papists, are, * "That their religion impels them to extirpate protestants, under the name of excommunicated *heretics*," and teaches them, † "That no faith is to be

* Protestant Appeal, p. 16.

† Ibid. p. 4. I hope I may be excused altering the arrangement adopted by the Society, in their charges against the Papists. As I wished to answer the

be kept with heretics, who, if Princes, are to be deposed and murdered; if subjects, to be massacred." And we are afterwards told that " * These principles they have never publicly disavowed, and as papists cannot with consistency disown." In answer to this, let me appeal to the oath before mentioned, and cite its words.

" And I do swear, that I do reject and
 " detest, as an unchristian and impious
 " position, that it is lawful to murder or
 " destroy any person or persons whatsoever,
 " ever, for or under pretence of their being
 " heretics; and also that unchristian
 " and impious principle, that no faith is
 " to be kept with heretics. And I further
 " declare, that it is no article of my faith,
 " and that I do renounce, reject, and ab-
 " jure, the opinion that persons excom-
 " municated by the pope and council, or
 " by any authority of the see of Rome, or
 " by any authority whatsoever, may be

the imputed tenets, by the renunciations made in the oath they have taken, I could not otherwise have brought the objection and answer under one view.

* Protestant Appeal, p. 5.

further. In the very oath which causes the Roman-catholics to abjure the doctrines instanced above, they likewise swear to the non-existence of this tenet. The person taking the oath, says, “ And
 “ I do solemnly, in the presence of God,
 “ profess, testify, and declare, that I do
 “ make this declaration, and every part
 “ thereof, in the plain and ordinary
 “ sense of the words of this oath, with-
 “ out any evasion, equivocation, or men-
 “ tal reservation whatever; and without
 “ any dispensation already granted by
 “ the Pope, or any authority of the See
 “ of Rome, or any person whatever; and
 “ without thinking that I am, or can
 “ be acquitted before God or man, or
 “ absolved of this declaration, or any
 “ part thereof, although the Pope, or
 “ any other persons or authority what-
 “ soever, shall dispense with, or annul
 “ the same, or declare that it was null
 “ or void.” Now, can it be imagined,
 that the members of *any religion*, en-
 tering into covenant with the Almighty,
 in this express and solemn manner, can
 think

think themselves absolved from the duties they profess, though the whole power of humanity should pronounce them so?

I suppose it will be allowed, that every religion has a God for its object: a supreme being the end of its worship: and, that no religion teaches its votaries to insult the power they address; or despise him from whom they implore aid and protection. Every one in taking an oath, calls upon that supreme Being, that object of his prayers and applications, to bear witness to the engagement he enters into.—A disregard of that oath, is an insult to the being so invoked. To neglect an engagement so entered into, is to despise him whose aid and protection we implore. But further; if the papists thought themselves at liberty from the shackles of the oath they have just taken, by the papal absolution, why did they not (prior to the passing of the late act in their favour) avail themselves of every advantage to be derived from making the renunciations required by the protestants? What could induce the first

nobleman in the kingdom to sacrifice his hereditary honours, rather than take the oaths by law established, if he did not think himself bound to regard them? What could induce the Roman-catholics in general, to forego all political distinction, rather than pronounce the necessary abjurations, if such an act was not deemed binding? What could induce them to deprive themselves of all temporal advantages, rather than profess what they did not believe, if such a conduct was thought "meritorious" by their church, or sanctified by the principles of their religion? What made them anxious for an oath agreeable to their real belief, if perjury was not esteemed criminal? What made them acquiesce in the present oath, if they could receive no benefit from it, but through that sinful medium? or what reason have the *society* themselves, to think the words "* ecclesiastical and spiritual" were left out "to accommodate the papists," if all words

* Protestant Appeal, p. 36.

were alike to them, because none were to be † regarded?

It must be granted, that if the Pope can absolve those of his religion from any, he can absolve them from every oath. And it will, I suppose, be allowed, that a person who will take one, will take a hundred oaths falsely. What propriety then is there, in charging the Roman-catholics with insincerity, in taking the one prescribed, when neither they nor their ancestors incurred the guilt of perjury, when there was double the temptation? We never heard of the papists attempting heretofore (like the Jews in Spain) to screen themselves from the penal laws, by an outward conformity in words. The members of the Romish church are not said to be more wicked now than formerly. The shocking accusation I am considering, is not the report of the day. It is not pretended to be more applicable to the present ge-

† Protestant Appeal, p. 37.

neration than to the last. If they are supposed to be just arrived at this pitch of enormity, why do not they pursue the plan? Why do not they acquire now (by taking every oath) the emoluments they have so long been debarred? or why not now reap the harvest of these imputed principles, by putting themselves on an equality with the rest of the kingdom?

I have now gone through what I consider the more material part of the *Appeal from the Protestant Association*. I have endeavoured to state with accuracy my idea of the powers of the repealing statute. I have endeavoured to place in a just point of view, such objections against that, or any act for the relief of the papists, to which the words of the oath afford an answer; and I have endeavoured to prove the validity of it. My inference is, that the advancement of popery within these kingdoms is not intended, since no undue or dangerous benefits are granted: that the oath is a sufficient apology for them, had they
ben

been greater : and that the actions as well as words of the English Roman-catholics, render it highly probable, that the tenderness of this oath must operate in favour of the protestant church.

PART THE SECOND.

I Now purpose to consider those arguments of the *society* against the members of the church of Rome, which are drawn from more remote springs than the foregoing. They are, I trust, of too desultory a nature to afford matter of real objection; yet their tendency on that account, is not the less dangerous. Our humanity is awakened with relations of the most cruel transactions. Our affections are roused as necessary to conviction. The appeal is made from the judgment to the imagination. Stories calculated to inflame the passions are too readily perused; and reason is likely to lose her influence in an attack directed to our feelings.

I wish not to defend one of the horrid facts given in the appeal. I wish not to palliate a massacre when ordained by a papist; nor to extenuate persecution
though

though adopted by a reformer. I wish to discern through the scenes of carnage offered to our view, the real motives for such enormities; and I wish to shew the barbarous and mistaken notions of the times, were much oftener the source of the calamity, than the real religious opinions of any Christian church.

Can we conceive that Charlemagne had no temporal motive, when, with the sword, he forced the Saxons and Huns to the baptismal font? Were the Teutonic knights clear from selfish motives, when they ravished and seized upon Prussia and Lithuania? The havock made by the crusaders, proves only the unlicensed spirit of the eleventh century: The interested views of the commercial states of Italy, and the ignorant superstition of the other powers of Europe. Let us consult any faithful historian, and we shall find, that as territory and dominion became established, and the enjoyment of both more permanent, religious wars

wars ceased, in a great measure, till the reformation of Luther.

The authors of the Appeal, however, without considering the circumstances that gave rise to the scenes which have deluged with blood the Christian world, support their opinion, by * telling us, with many aggravating circumstances, that a mother and her two daughters were burned in the island of Guernsey by papists, merely because they were protestants. That a difference in religion brought the most severe punishments on many individuals, I readily allow ; and God forbid I should ever, in the most remote manner, contribute to the recommitment of the least outrage on that account. But I cannot, therefore, agree to throw the odium arising from so wicked a conduct solely on religion ; because, scenes of equal cruelty have been too often prompted by ambition. Too often have persons of the same commu-

* Protestant Appeal, p. 9.

nion, acted the most shocking barbarities against each other. Neither, when doctrinal opinions have been the real source, can I consent to accuse only the members of the Romish church. The adherents to Storck and Munster, the original anabaptists, made profession of putting all to death who opposed their gospel; and supported their proceedings by that text of scripture wherein it is said, * “I came not to send peace but a sword.”

The behaviour of Calvin to the ingenious, though antichristian, Servetus, convinces us, that humanity added not lustre to the cause of that reformer. That the destruction of a learned physician, who had made the important discovery of the circulation of the blood, should be sought and accomplished with such cool inveteracy, is a proof of the most sanguinary inclinations. And this

* St. Matthew, chap. x. 34.

well † known trait of Calvin's character, is little to the honour of those sacred precepts, on account of which he pretended

† I beg leave to present my readers with two original letters from distinguished personages of different religions; and I hope they will then be persuaded, sentiments of humanity are not confined to any one church, government, or country. The following letter from John Calvin (written by his own hand) to the Marquis of Poët, Lord Chamberlain to the king of Navarre, dated Sept. 30, 1561, is still preserved in the castle of Bastic Roland, near Montelimar: "May honour, glory, and riches be the reward of your trouble; above all, be sure you don't fail to clear the country of those pitiful zealots, who are exciting the people to revolt against us. Such monsters as those ought to be destroyed, as I dealt with Michael Servetus the Spaniard." The other letter is from the Abbé de Fenelon, afterwards archbishop of Cambrai, to the Maréchal de Noailles, and is written against the system of political persecution introduced by Louvois, and which tarnished so much the glory of Louis the 14th.

22 Juillet 1684.

"Il n'est point à propos, ce me semble, de tourmenter ni d'importuner les soldats étrangers & hérétiques, pour les faire convertir. On n'y réussiroit pas. Tout au plus on les jetteroit dans l'hypocrisie, & ils déserteroient en foule. Il suffit de ne souffrir pas d'exercice

tended Servetus was assassinated ; and on account of which he was buried alive : while the contriver of his fate, with a malignity which Christianity could not dictate, triumphed not only in his death, but his torture.

Our eighth Henry marked the progressive changes of his religious opinions in characters of blood. And as the cause

d'exercise public, suivant l'intention du roi. Quand quelque officier ou autre peut leur insinuer quelque mot, ou les mettre en chemin de vouloir s'instruire de bon grè, cela est excellent. Mais point de gêne, ni d'empressements indiscrets. S'ils sont malades, on peut les faire visiter d'abord par quelque officier catholique, qui les console, qui les fasse soulager, & qui insinue quelque bonne parole. Si cela ne sert de rien, & si la maladie augmente, on peut aller un peu plus loin, mais doucement, & sans contrainte, pour leur montrer que l'ancienne église est la meilleure, & que c'est celle qui vient des apôtres. . . . Si le malade n'est pas capable d'entendre ces raisons, je crois qu'on doit se contenter de lui faire faire des actes de contrition, de foi & d'amour, ajoutant souvent : ' mon Dieu, je me soumets à tout ce que la vraie église enseigne ; je la reconnois pour ma mère, en quelque lieu qu'elle soit.' Il faut pour la sepulture, suivre la règle de l'évêque diocésain, & éviter l'éclat autant qu'on le peut, sans avilir la religion."

of the church of England cannot suffer from the caprice of a tyrant, we may safely own, that on his departure from popery, his punishments were more cruel, as his temper was more embittered.

But let us pass over the detestable scenes that occur in investigating all religious disputes. The comparative merit I have endeavoured to give to the papists, is little credit to the perpetrators of cruelty ; and the followers of Christ in general, would receive small justification under similar circumstances, were the enormities committed by the disciples of Eusebius and Arius, to swell this list of vices. I want not to exculpate the adherents to one religion, at the expence of another ; for I can never suppose I throw an additional degree of either blame or approbation on any sect, by proving many members of each alike criminal. I only want to shew, the dread entertained of the persecuting spirit of popery, was a terror equally applicable to every other church, in the unenlightened periods that authorised such devastation ; since, during those

those times, the names of Christians and Arians, Calvinists and Catholics, have alternately accompanied their superiority in arms, with the most terrible executions.

Another reason (mentioned in the Appeal) why the penal statutes should be restored to their full power, is, “* That whilst papists in England are claiming toleration, protestants in France are exposed to persecution, by the repeal of the edict of Nantz.” This would have been too mean a plea to have required an answer, had not the authors seemed to consider it as a most convincing one. They conclude this generous sentiment, by calling the instanced “contrast” an “astonishing one, that needs only to be considered, to evidence the impropriety of the late repeal.” Had the protestants who drew the above inference, been possessed of more just notions of either our religion or government, they could never have deemed the contrast astonishing, or the conclusion

* Protestant Appeal p. 24.

upright. They must have known, that the dictates of our religion, when viewed through any other medium than party zeal, breathe the spirit of “ * peace” and “ good will towards men.” They must have known, that the basis of our constitution, obliges a more just and merciful conduct, than the caprice of an absolute monarch. They must have known, we are not to be judged by comparison ; and that the highest example of justice afforded to humanity, is directly contrary to their argument.

But we have no reason to suppose the revocation of the edict of Nantz, had its rise in the religious principles of the power that ordained it. The persecutions in general of the French Calvinists, were at least as much the offsprings of a mistaken policy, as the effects of zeal for the established religion. During the reign of Henry the Great (who was the best king the French ever had) the Calvinists enjoyed by the edict we are speak-

† St. Luke chap. ii. 14.

ing of, most valuable and extensive privileges.

The cruelties both prior and subsequent to his time, were intended, however wrong the idea, to support the stability of government. The restless disposition of the reformed who were settled in France, made them obnoxious to monarchy. Civil wars were inseparably connected with, or were rather the beginnings of every religious dispute. We find, at one time, Condé and Coligné declaring themselves Calvinists, because the Guises sided with the papists. And during the fatal æra of the revocation of the edict of Nantz, a rivalry in power existed, capable of producing the greatest outrages *. Hatred to Colbert prompted the young Louvois to † revenge a private quarrel upon all of his adversary's religion. Before that time, Louis the 14th had viewed with contempt and ab-

* Siècle de Louis XIV. c. 32.

† The behaviour of our own Queen Elizabeth to Mary of Scotland, sufficiently justifies me in the great events I have attributed to a jealousy of this nature.

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horrence,

horrence, the disputes about religion; and then could not have the honour of his church in view, since, at the time, he was prevailed upon to devote the reformed, he was carrying on a war against the Pope. And what but the impetuosity of a young minister, joined to the inveteracy of his father, the chancellor Le Tellier, could have produced such an horrid massacre? The sense of the nation was against the dragonade. The sense of every one of the other ministers was against it. The Duc de Noailles endeavoured all he could to prevent the issuing out the orders he † received. He endeavoured, what he could, to hinder the execution of them. (How right it was in him to execute them at all, is not now to be considered: I only mention this, to shew the unreasonableness of imputing to any body of men the effects of rancour in a few individuals). And when the dreadful catastrophe did take place, he

† Vid. Mémoires de Noailles, par M. l'Abbé Milot, Tome i. Livre i.

endeavoured all he could to keep within bounds the fury of soldiers, warmed with the hopes of plunder.

But supposing this scene of bloodshed was consonant to the spirit of the 17th century, the disposition of the present age is much altered. An increased humanity must be allowed us, however weak a title we may have to call other virtues progressive. Even within our time, civilization has been more universal. And I heartily wish I could congratulate the authors of the Appeal, in having kept pace with the general improvement.

* Another reason given for not trusting the papists, is their conduct in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745. Since the revolution, their behaviour has been negatively good: and it appears to me very wrong to reproach those for not performing actual services, who, by their exclusion from power, are totally disabled from such exertions. The two

• Protestant Appeal, p. 14.

mentioned periods, were not marked by any commotions among the English Roman-catholics; and most of the Scotch insurgents were Calvinists. In Ireland, the papists were not so peaceable; but their ignorance, and persecutions by the protestants, may account for attempts moderation would have checked.

* The last objection I mean to consider, is that made against the purport of the before mentioned oath, on account of the words "ecclesiastical or spiritual" being left out, and the terms "temporal or civil" substituted. I cannot think this alteration affects our government in the least. Who is so proper for the head of the popish church as the Pope? Would there be any propriety in making a protestant king of England the director of the Romish religion? or could the allegiance to the temporal power we require, receive any stability from renunciations inconsistent with the fundamental principles of that religion? To subscribe to

* Protestant Appeal, p. 36.

such words, they must disregard every dictate of conscience, every moral tie, and we should of consequence indulge only the most profligate and abandoned characters.

I say nothing to the objections scattered through the *Protestants Appeal*, against the interpretations of scripture adopted by the Romish church. I do not think the members of that religion amenable to any human authority, for their speculative opinions, or their own modes of worship, unless they affect the civil government of these kingdoms; and that if our devotion “* infuse harshness into our sentiments, and acrimony into our speech, we may conclude, that under a serious appearance, carnal passions lurk. And, if ever it shall so far lift us up with self-conceit, as to make us establish our own opinions as an infallible standard for the whole christian world, and lead us to consign to perdition all who differ from us, either in some doctrinal

* Blair's Sermons, p. 301.

tenets, or in the mode of expressing them ; we may rest assured, that to much pride we have joined much ignorance, both of the nature of devotion, and of the gospel of Christ."

And now give me leave to observe, in regard to the intended † application to parliament, for a repeal of the repealing statute ; that a compliance with such a desire, on the trivial causes alledged, would justly subject us to the very blame we have been bestowing on the papists, for the revocation of the edict of Nantz ; For any revival of the penal statutes must evidence the same disposition in ourselves : Any abolition of the warrantable favours we have granted, must impeach our credit. Not only a regard for justice, but our own interest, warns us not to withdraw a protection that has not been forfeited. The objects of that protection have not shewn themselves unworthy of it. It appears by the language of the *Association*, that the protestant interest

† Protestant Appeal, p. 60.

was small in comparison with the popish : That a handful of men had formed a law, they could not enforce the observance of : That the executions of the provisions of the act, depended upon the will of a stronger body of men, than the legislative power ; and that hence arose our danger. But this is not the case. We part with no power. The parliament give a law they can defend. They give conditions, and can exact the performance of them. Should the papists forget their benefactors, the benefits that have been bestowed, may be annulled. Should they continue a behaviour that has procured them the present indulgences, they may hope for greater.

If, however, some apprehensions prevent, for the present, any further favour ; let us not, through caprice, or vain terror, cause distresses that can have no good consequence ; or create severities, that cannot be defended by any rule of policy or justice.

I have thus endeavoured to rectify some alarming mistakes, that prevailed
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in the *Protestants Appeal*. My observations are too plain and palpable, to raise suspicions of their being adopted for any sinister end. They are meant to support the cause of humanity, and to rescue the church of England from the danger of being involved in persecution. In such a cause, even a weak advocate may plead with success. And when the appeal is made to every member of our persuasion, I have no doubt but the verdict will be on the side of Benevolence.



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